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that they had been previously performed, and is quite in keeping with the rest of the evidence.*

V. In a notice subjoined to the account given in *Faulkner*, of the rehearsal of the *Messiah* at the Music-Hall in Dublin, it is stated that this oratorio was *composed for the charity for whose benefit the performance was given*. Handel, who was a man of high honour and integrity, never could have sanctioned such an impression on the minds of the committee, who inserted that notice, had there been a previous performance of this oratorio for any other purpose than this very charity.

VI. In the letter already given,† dated Dublin, December 29, 1741, from Handel to Mr. Jennens, the following passage occurs:—"It was with the greatest pleasure I saw the continuation of your kindness, by the lines you was pleased to send me, in order to be prefixed to your Oratorio *Messiah, which I set to Musick before I left England.*"

It cannot be supposed that Handel would express himself thus, if there had been a performance of the oratorio before he left England. Had such been the case, Mr. Jennens, a man of eminent literary and artistic acquirements, who frequently visited London, and was inquisitive about every event in the world of literature and art, must have heard of the performance of the oratorio, of which the words were selected by himself; and so must thousands of persons besides. And to suppose Handel, under such circumstances, when he had been several weeks in Dublin, writing to his friend, acknowledging having received from him certain words to be prefixed in the title-page of the oratorio, and, silent as to the performance, communicating to him as a piece of news, the fact that he had *set the words of the oratorio to music* (!) is to suppose an absurdity which needs not the parade of a formal refutation.

From all these premises, we arrive with perfect certainty at the conclusion, that no performance of the *Messiah* took place in London till after Handel's return from Ireland; and that Dublin may rightfully claim the honour of being first to witness and applaud this sublime and immortal work.

[The above condensed summary is from "An Account of the Visit of Handel to Dublin," by Horatio Townsend; a pleasant volume in which those who take an interest in this controversy will find many additional details in the evidence collected by Mr. Townsend, to fortify his position, that Handel's Oratorio, *The Messiah*, was produced for the first time in Dublin.—*Ed. M. T.*]

* The account given of this transaction by Mr. W. Gardiner, in his amusing volumes, "Music and Friends" (published in 1838), is, that "the composer wished to enlist some choristers." But Mr. Gardiner, who was not born until thirty years after the occurrence, gives no reason for departing from Dr. Burney's narrative, nor for adopting and repeating the story of the previous performance and failure of the *Messiah*, without even an allusion to Dr. Burney's reasoning and deliberate opinion on the subject.

† An Account of Handel's Visit to Ireland, p. 50.

A FEW WORDS ON THE MUSICAL INSTITUTIONS.

THE unusual shortness of the London Season has had the effect of bringing the concerts and other musical entertainments customarily held during that time, to a premature close; the last of the annual musical meetings being that given on the 2nd of July, for the benefit of the Choral Fund—an institution having for its object the alleviation of the suffering and distress of aged and infirm professed musicians.

In alluding to this subject, it may not be out of place to call attention to the many claims which such institutions have upon the consideration of all the professors of the art in connection with which they are established; nor are these details alone interesting to such parties: they appeal with equal force to the public for their sympathy and support. The nature of the pursuits of a musician seldom affords him an opportunity to do more than "keep the wolf from the door;" there are exceptions to this, as to every other rule, of course; but those exceptions are mostly confined to the possessors of genius. No lucky strokes of fortune, as in the commercial world, ever visit the musician—he works for all he gets, and what he gets is seldom more than sufficient to pay his way. Our experience amongst members of the general profession abundantly confirms this view of the subject. Indeed, we have known men of high musical and general education—of habits of the strictest probity and economy, whose families, after their decease, have been saved from want by the judicious application of the funds of musical benevolent institutions. A case very recently came to our knowledge, in which a well-known orchestral performer, on retiring from a first-rate position in the profession—one which he had held for nearly half a century, was only too glad to accept the annual allowance granted to all the members of the musical benevolent institution to which he belonged. It was known that this gentleman's life had been marked by prudence and economy: his character was universally respected—and the position he had assumed, in a social point of view, was merely that of an inexpensive respectability.

These facts strongly urge upon the mind, that although, generally speaking, more talent than usual in other professions is required to make a man eminent in the science of music, the remuneration for that talent is on too small a scale. We are quite aware that large sums are spent in the encouragement of the art, but then the fact forces itself upon our attention that the principal part of those sums are lavished upon the fortunate few; without, however, staying to consider the causes which lead to this unequal distribution, we pursue our intention of placing before the profession and the public the claims which the musical benevolent institutions have on their sympathy and support.

The Royal Society, which has been established ever since the year 1738, is the oldest musical association. It dispenses its funds with a liberal though not a prodigal hand. Many of our best-known instrumental performers have owed the comfort of the last few years of their life to the aid which this society has afforded them when unable to endure the fatigue of gaining their livelihood. We have heard it objected, that vocal performers are not eligible for election; but when we reflect that the choral body of the profession were provided for by the establishment of "The Choral Fund," in 1791, we think the objection in a

great measure removed—excepting as regards principal male vocal performers, who certainly appear to be left, by the present scheme of the benevolent institutions, quite out of the question. The ladies have their provision in the “Royal Society of Female Musicians,” the salutary laws and enactments of which have ensured public support.

None of the institutions we have mentioned are adequately supported by the general public: the first has certainly large resources at its command, but these can scarcely be said to have come from the public purse—a large sum was added, however, to the funds of the Royal Society and the Choral Fund by the memorable Festival held in Westminster Abbey, in the reign of William IV. The Royal Academy and an institution since defunct were also recipients of a fourth part of the profits, which amounted in the whole to a sum exceeding £10,000.

With respect to the Choral Fund, although the Society possesses considerable funded property, we are assured that the committee are compelled annually to reduce their stock, so numerous have the claimants upon its consideration of late become.

In thus bringing before the public the claims of time-honoured and valuable institutions, we trust that some of our readers, in whose power it may be to lend a helping hand to their brethren in more needy circumstances, will not forget or refuse to advocate their cause, with which view as we have said, we are tempted cursorily to bring them under their observation, merely adding that in the case of any of these benevolent institutions, the officers are always most ready to give the fullest information on every point connected with their purpose or the administration of their funds.

VERNON.

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF CHARITY CHILDREN, AT SAINT PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

THOSE among us who have any love for, and have spent time in the attempt at improving Church Music, should be interested in this annual gathering of school children: the largest probably that ever takes place.

Apart, indeed, from the musical point of view in which we are to regard it, there is something exceedingly grand and affecting in the sight itself. If we are sufficiently within the circle of the dome to observe, the gradual arrival of the schools is in itself worth attention: the quiet and order observed, their mysterious appearance at the top of the raised circle without apparent means of approach, and the evident air of intense purpose and pre-occupation on the part of every child, give one the impression of a singular and unusual event; while the effect of the disposition of the schools, especially with respect to *sex*, is very happy. When all are assembled the effect is one of great grandeur, from the vast number of persons, children and spectators, gathered within the church. The best place to view the *whole* assembly is from the seats under the organ, where the choir sits. We were favoured last year with some observations on the ceremony from the pen of Hector Berlioz; and the effect of it on the sensitive mind of Haydn, is the substance of an anecdote well known. We are anxious, however, with the permission of our readers, to offer a few remarks on the music itself, and if we acknowledge that there are a few points, in which, in a professional point of view, the meeting might be much improved, it must be added that we do so with no intention of depreciating the merits of the performance, but with a hope for its improvement.

The first observation we shall make, is, that it is a great

pity the choir are silent whenever any occasion for the employment of the children's voices occurs: as in the Metrical Psalmody, in some parts of the Hallelujah Chorus, the Coronation Anthem, &c. The reason given for this would no doubt be, that at those parts of the choruses the time suddenly suffers considerable alteration to accommodate the large body of voices, with a disposition to drag: but it may be asked, in reply, is this disposition entirely insurmountable? Of course this can only be answered by experiment at rehearsal. There are but few even among professional persons who have studied the art of keeping large bodies of singers together, and of inducing them to be obedient to the conductor's beat; but a case analogous to this one, is that of a cathedral choir. Especially where the organ is at some distance, we know the choir are likely to drag, because of the time the tones of the instrument take to reach them. For this reason the organist never plays *with*, but *before* his choir; perhaps to the extent of a minim, or half a bar. The effect of this to a casual looker on, at the organ desk, is most perplexing; but it nevertheless is matter of every-day experience; *the organ precedes the choir*. Some such proportion *might* be arranged between the organ, choir, and conductor on the one side, and the choir of children on the other. Instead of the pause and sudden alteration of time now observable, the conductor might beat *before* he expects the effect, and so calculate the time necessary for a large and unmusical body to answer the beat. It may be added, that the children *take breath to begin to sing*, when they see the beat; the *sound itself* is therefore behind.

The choir of men might be advantageously doubled, and the general effect would gain inconceivably. The trumpets the same.

The Psalmody we thought unsuccessful, from the silence of the choir, and the slowness of the *time* in which it was performed. The organ, in the 100th Psalm particularly, was at times half a bar behind the singers; always something behind. Two of the three tunes are well-selected, but that to the 113th Psalm is a sad specimen of the worst era of Church Music. Even if the character of it were good and ecclesiastical, there are not two dozen charity children in London who could keep together throughout it with a good accent. The best tunes for a large number of voices, tutored or not, are those in *duple time*. It is matter of doubt whether a tune in triple time was ever yet sung by the mass of a congregation, “Hanover,” perhaps, excepted. In this instance, the choice is peculiarly unfortunate; since it is to the exclusion of the “Old 113th,” one of the noblest “Psalm tunes” the church possesses, and having the true characteristics of a melody to be sung by a multitude—breadth and vigour.

The changes of harmony in the organ accompaniment to these tunes were ineffective, we thought, from the thin, penetrating quality of the children's voices: they should be supported by the male voices of the choir, singing the melody in octaves, when the variety of colouring would be most effective.

Some parts of the Coronation Anthem are too high for the children's voices; especially when *without* the vocal harmony, the effect is extremely bald: a little excision would be advisable here.

The responses, as sung by the children, are altogether a mistake. They sing the ornamental melody added for choirs by Tallis; instead of this the whole choral body, children and adults, should sing the *Plain Song itself*, accompanied by organ harmonies, as on Festivals, in Cathedrals. The effect of this would be grand in the extreme, especially if the number of adult voices could be increased. We are continually losing the Plain Song in this way, and *listening* instead to a melody supplemental to it.

There is one way in which this meeting might be made most useful and interesting, which we have only space just to mention: why should not new compositions be